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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 10.05 a.m.

Statement by the President of the General Assembly

1. **Mr. Lajčák** (Slovakia), President of the General Assembly, said that it was imperative to maintain and build momentum for the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved. In view of the interlinked and universal nature of the Goals and targets, due attention must be given to all areas in order for progress to be made across the board. The high-level political forum on sustainable development, which would be convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council in 2018 and under the auspices of the General Assembly in 2019, should serve to keep Member States on track and ensure that no region or group was left behind.

2. During the current session of the Second Committee, Member States should reinforce their commitments to implement the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. They should also scale up their efforts in the areas of climate change mitigation, adaptation and means of implementation.

3. Financing for the Sustainable Development Goals remained critically important; in that regard, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development continued to provide the necessary guidance on financing for development. The Committee ought to examine innovative ways of ensuring that the ambitious 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development could actually be implemented.

4. During the current session of the General Assembly, he would be placing a special emphasis on youth education and inclusion. Young persons must be integrally involved in development. He would also take an active part in the International Decade for Action, "Water for Sustainable Development", 2018–2028, which would be launched on World Water Day, 22 March 2018. The vast potential of the Committee's work to improve people's quality of life all over the world and promote the sustainability of the planet made it essential to agree on commitments during the current session, especially at a time when multilateralism was under threat.

5. The work of the Committee also came at a crucial time because it coincided with many new processes intended to reform the way the United Nations delivered on the development agenda, such as the alignment of the work of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council with the 2030 Agenda; the Secretary-General's reform initiatives; the implementation and follow-up of General Assembly resolution 71/243 on the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development of the United Nations development system; and the Committee's continued discussions on the reform of the United Nations Human Settlements Programme.

6. The United Nations development system must become more strategic, accountable, efficient and results-oriented in order to better meet the development hopes of the world's people. Care would be needed to achieve coherent outcomes.

7. Noting the huge impact that technology and innovation were making on people's lives and prosperity, he welcomed the forthcoming joint meeting between the Committee and the Economic and Social Council to discuss access to the benefits of technological advances under the theme "The future of everything: sustainable development in the age of rapid technological change".

8. The Committee should continue to take the specific challenges facing countries into account in its work, in particular those faced by African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries, small island developing States, countries in conflict or post-conflict situations and middle-income countries.

9. When deliberating on critical but often contentious development issues, such as poverty eradication, macroeconomic issues, global governance and South-South cooperation, it was important to remember that the goal was not merely the adoption of a text. Meaningful impact on policies and programmes was also needed to improve people's lives.

10. The Committee should conduct inclusive and transparent work that was concluded in a timely fashion. All delegations must engage constructively at the current critical juncture with a view to achieving consensual outcomes that could make a concrete difference in the lives of the people whom the United Nations served.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (A/72/75–E/2017/56, A/72/174, A/72/216, A/72/343, A/72/343/Corr.1 and A/72/353)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (A/72/228)

(b) **Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States** (A/72/119, A/72/119/Add.1 and A/72/214)

(c) **Disaster risk reduction** (A/72/259)

(d) **Protection of global climate for present and future generations of humankind** (A/72/82, A/72/152, A/72/152/Corr.1)

(e) **Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa** (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(f) **Convention on Biological Diversity** (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(g) **Education for sustainable development** (A/72/130)

(h) **Harmony with Nature** (A/72/175)

(i) **Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all** (A/72/156 and A/72/160)

(j) **Combating sand and dust storms**

11. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the momentum for implementing the 2030 Agenda remained strong, with many Heads of State or Government taking leadership roles. Countries were increasingly integrating the Sustainable Development Goals into national development plans and, in line with the interconnected nature of the Goals, seeking to ensure policy coherence. Stakeholder participation was growing, with business, civil society and the scientific community deeply engaged. A paradigm shift was taking place: the focus was increasingly on leaving no one behind and finding collaborative solutions. The Secretary-General's holistic vision for sustainable development included helping countries build resilient societies, averting crises, sustaining peace and strengthening the linkages between peace and security, humanitarian relief and achievement of the Goals.

12. Those positive changes notwithstanding, the pace of progress was too slow for the Goals to be achieved by 2030; and progress had not always been equitable. The key message was that the current momentum must be increased and progress made more inclusive to accomplish the bold vision articulated in the 2030 Agenda.

13. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General on mainstreaming the three dimensions of sustainable development throughout the United Nations system (A/72/75–E/2017/56), he said that the report addressed the need to maintain momentum and accelerate progress, highlighted that organizations within the United Nations system were shaping their priorities, strategic plans and programmes with reference to the integrated and holistic nature of the Goals, and provided an update on how they were integrating the 2030 Agenda into their programmes. The report also addressed the ways that the United Nations system was improving the sustainability of its own facilities and management operations.

14. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development" (A/72/228), he said that the report provided additional analysis of unfinished business in that context. It also addressed the work of the 2017 high-level political forum, the implementation of the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, the strengthening of the science-policy interface, the preparations for the Global Sustainable Development Report to be published in 2019, and the regional dimension of sustainable development.

15. Introducing the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/72/214), he said that the report presented an in-depth analysis of the priorities of small island developing States and included an account of relevant activities of Member States, United Nations funds and programmes, specialized agencies and regional commissions, as well as national, regional and subregional organizations.

16. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on agricultural technology for sustainable development (A/72/216), he said that the report reviewed key challenges such as the increasing vulnerability of food systems to climate change and the need to adapt to changing farm demographics while increasing agricultural productivity and enhancing the resource base. The report analysed recent trends in areas including scientific, technological and biological

innovations, holistic agricultural development, urban food production, water-saving and irrigation technologies, post-harvest and food systems, and institutional support for innovations in information and communications technology. The report also outlined policy solutions that went beyond agricultural production to encompass climate change, food losses and waste, and rural-urban linkages. Other recommendations contained in the report included impactful localized research and development, enabling frameworks at the subnational, national and global levels and a redirection of investments.

17. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on harmony with nature (A/72/175), he said that the report drew on contributions to the seventh interactive dialogue on harmony with nature, held on 21 April 2017, and addressed Earth jurisprudence and the 2030 Agenda, trends in the implementation of Earth-centred law, and a range of related initiatives and achievements in law, policy, education and public engagement. The report also provided key recommendations for restoring humans' relationship with nature.

18. He then introduced the Secretary-General's reports on ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (A/72/160) and on the United Nations Decade of Sustainable Energy for All (A/72/156). The former report provided an overview of progress towards Sustainable Development Goal 7 and proposed ways of strengthening institutional support and intergovernmental and inter-agency coordination on energy issues, whereas the latter report highlighted activities by stakeholders to advance progress towards sustainable energy for all.

19. Lastly, introducing the report of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change on its twenty-second session, held in Marrakech from 7 to 18 November 2016 (FCCC/CP/2016/10), he said that the report identified the main outcomes of the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the twelfth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol and the first session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Paris Agreement. During the Conference, Governments had pledged more than $81 million to the Adaptation Fund, decided to operationalize the Paris Committee on Capacity-building, agreed on an extended gender work programme and initiated efforts towards operationalizing the local communities' and indigenous people's platform.

20. **Mr. Glasser** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/72/259), said that over the past two decades 1.35 million lives and $2.5 trillion had been lost to disasters, which caused an average of 26 million people to fall into poverty annually. The average loss borne by less developed countries as a result of disasters equated to over 20 per cent of their average annual social expenditure. Those costs were increasing because of a failure to take disaster risk into consideration in investment planning and, more fundamentally, because of climate change.

21. Hydrometeorological events such as floods and storms were responsible for the vast majority of disasters, which had doubled in frequency over the last four decades. As the Secretary-General had pointed out on his recent visit to Dominica, climate-related disasters were not "natural" but symptomatic of human activity and, specifically, of climate change. During that visit the Secretary-General had also highlighted countries' enormous vulnerability and the urgent need for innovative financing instruments to boost their resilience. Delivering on the 2030 Agenda would only be possible if greenhouse gas emissions were cut as rapidly as possible, in line with the Paris Agreement, and if climate and disaster risk were reduced, in accordance with the global targets of the Sendai Framework.

22. The report highlighted the progress that had been made in developing technical and policy guidance for implementation and monitoring of the Sendai Framework. It also drew attention to areas that required immediate attention.

23. The open-ended inter-governmental expert working group on indicators and terminology relating to disaster risk reduction, which had concluded its work in November 2016, had developed indicators for monitoring progress against the seven targets of the Sendai Framework, which had also been endorsed by the United Nations Statistical Commission monitoring the disaster risk reduction targets under Sustainable Development Goals 1, 11 and 13. Shared indicators would support coherence in implementing and monitoring both the 2030 Agenda and the Sendai Framework, thereby reducing the reporting burden for Member States. In addition, a tool to systematically track progress and guide countries in their development of disaster risk reduction strategies, the Sendai Framework Monitor, was being developed; it would also provide data to facilitate risk-informed investment decisions.

24. The 2017 Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, hosted by Mexico in May, had brought a range of stakeholders together to showcase the latest technologies, forge initiatives and renew commitments. It had been emphasized that urgent action was needed to achieve global target (e) of the Sendai Framework to substantially increase the number of countries with national and local disaster risk reduction strategies by 2020, and to integrate disaster risk reduction into economic planning and investment decisions, especially for investments in infrastructure. The Global Platform had been informed by the outcomes of the regional platforms for disaster risk reduction held in various countries, which, like the Global Platform, had allowed Member States to share ideas and identify practical ways to implement the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement within the overarching context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Those outcomes had also provided substantive inputs for the 2017 high-level political forum and the follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda at the regional level.

25. With technical and capacity-building support from the United Nations, Member States were developing policies and legislation, establishing and updating disaster loss databases, conducting risk assessments and training staff to embed risk in development planning, with a view to achieving global target (e) of the Sendai Framework. The report highlighted the need to develop building and infrastructure standards that incorporated climate and disaster risk, in particular to guide future private and public sector investments in infrastructure. The United Nations Plan of Action on Disaster Risk Reduction for Resilience was currently being implemented as a direct response to calls by Member States in General Assembly resolution 71/243 for enhanced coherence and the more efficient and effective use of resources.

26. States were encouraged in the report to invest in the development of disaster loss databases and risk profiles that incorporated climate risk in order to accelerate progress towards target (e) of the Sendai Framework and to provide an evidence base for risk-informed investments. The report also recommended that the high-level political forum should take disaster risk reduction into account, including in the voluntary national reviews. Lastly, the report recognized the importance of partnerships and inclusive approaches for the implementation of the Sendai Framework. The report and the recommendations contained therein provided an important basis for the upcoming General Assembly resolution.

27. **Ms. Sultanoğlu** (Assistant Administrator and Regional Director for Europe and the Commonwealth of Independent States of the United Nations Development Programme), presenting the report of the Secretary-General entitled "International cooperation and coordination for the human and ecological rehabilitation and economic development of the Semipalatinsk region of Kazakhstan" (A/72/343 and A/72/343/Corr.1), said that the report outlined progress made from 2014 to 2016 by the Government of Kazakhstan, United Nations agencies and the international community in addressing the social, economic and ecological challenges of rehabilitating and developing the Semipalatinsk region. Since the closure of the Semipalatinsk nuclear test site, Kazakhstan had been working to improve the well-being of people in the region. The focus of government and international programmes in the region had shifted from humanitarian assistance to the sustainable development agenda, meaning that economic, social and environmental issues were being addressed in a more holistic manner. As a result of a State programme, the Semipalatinsk region had witnessed steady industrial and agricultural growth. A five-year area-based development programme operated by the Government of Kazakhstan in conjunction with United Nations partners had concluded in 2016. The programme, which had offered community-based solutions in areas such as maternal and child health, local economic development, energy efficiency and citizen participation, had become a model for other regions in Kazakhstan, owing to the self-governance mechanisms which it pioneered; it had also contributed to dramatic declines in infant and maternal mortality.

28. Despite the firm foundations for lasting recovery and sustainable development, the region's long-term sustainable development would require continuous effort by the Government and the international community. The report outlined several priorities for future action to help rehabilitate the areas affected by the nuclear testing, including the need to address rural poverty and income inequality between regions, improve the quality of education, guarantee full gender equality and strengthen health care and social protection systems.

29. **Ms. Barbut** (Executive Secretary of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa), in a recorded message, said that the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, had resulted in some important outcomes not contained in the report

on implementation of General Assembly 71/229 on the Convention (A/72/151, section II), which had been prepared prior to the Conference.

30. Firstly, the Conference had adopted a new strategic framework to replace the existing 10-year strategy up to 2018. The new strategy was predicated on the understanding that desertification, land degradation and drought constituted global threats that contributed to the creation and exacerbation of economic, social and environmental problems. The strategy would be effective from 2018 to 2030, to coincide with the 2030 Agenda. Since desertification, land degradation and drought continued to seriously compromise sustainable development, particularly in affected States, the strategy was designed to minimalize, prevent and reverse desertification and land degradation, and to mitigate the effects of drought; its overarching goal was to achieve a world free of land degradation by 2030. It included a strategic goal on drought, a phenomenon which was predicted to increase in frequency and intensity, including in zones that were currently humid. The Conference had also adopted a decision on the promotion of drought policies, which should be based on three pillars: early warning systems, vulnerability and risk assessment, and drought risk mitigation measures.

31. Secondly, the Conference had reaffirmed the leadership role of the secretariat of the Convention with regard to achieving land degradation neutrality. It had also recognized that measures taken to achieve land degradation neutrality could have knock-on effects, thereby contributing to an acceleration of progress towards other Sustainable Development Goals, and could play a catalysing role in attracting financing for sustainable development and climate action. In that connection, the Conference had duly recognized the contribution that target 3 of Goal 15, on land degradation, could make to sustainable development in all areas. The secretariat had assisted parties in defining national targets for the achievement of land degradation neutrality; 113 countries to date had either defined targets or were in the process of doing so. The primary challenge to progress towards land degradation neutrality was finding funding for the projects that countries would put in place to meet their targets. However, the secretariat of the Convention had made significant progress in the area of innovative financing, having established, with the Mirova-Natixis Group, the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund — the first ever public-private fund dedicated to reversing land degradation, with an anticipated initial contribution of approximately $300 million.

32. Thirdly, the Conference had heeded the call made by the General Assembly regarding the linkages between desertification, land degradation and drought, and forced migration. In a decision entitled "The positive role that measures taken under the Convention can play to address desertification/land degradation and drought as one of the drivers that causes migration", the Conference had requested the secretariat to support regional and international initiatives to promote sustainable land management with a view to reducing forced migration.

33. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the implementation of General Assembly resolution 71/229 on the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, (A/72/152, section II), she said that the report contained, inter alia: an overview of developments since the last report, submitted the previous year; an update on the preparations for the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties and its subsidiary bodies, and the follow-up to the 2030 Agenda; a description of the global celebration of World Day to Combat Desertification, which had taken place in Ouagadougou on 15 June, and the outreach activities that had taken place at the event; an update on the secretariat's collaboration with the Global Environment Facility and the work of the science-policy interface mechanism; and observations and recommendations, which included a warning that the overarching Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved if land degradation was not halted and reversed.

34. **Ms. Palmer** (Executive Secretary of the Convention on Biological Diversity), speaking in a recorded message to introduce her report on the Convention on Biological Diversity (A/72/152, section III), said that the report covered the outcomes of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, held in Cancun, Mexico, in December 2016. Those included the adoption of the Cancun Declaration on Mainstreaming the Conservation and Sustainable Use of Biodiversity for Well-being, which focused on integrating biodiversity into key economic sectors in order to achieve global biodiversity targets. During the high-level segment of the Conference several parties had announced new commitments that would advance achievement of the Aichi Biodiversity Targets, and 20 mega-diverse countries had adopted a charter to achieve Aichi Target 11 by 2020.

35. At the thirteenth meeting of the Conference 33 decisions had been adopted, most importantly a decision on mainstreaming biodiversity in such sectors

as agriculture, forestry, fisheries and tourism. A number of side events had also been held with a view to engaging a range of stakeholders in the implementation of the Convention; among them was the 2016 forum on business and biodiversity, which had resulted in more than 103 major businesses signing a new business and biodiversity pledge.

36. Despite significant progress, the Aichi Biodiversity Targets would not be achieved by 2020 at the current pace. The Conference had therefore urged parties to intensify efforts to achieve their national targets, and also to consider increasing the scope of national or regional targets.

37. The Convention secretariat had launched a report on the ways in which the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the 20 Aichi Biodiversity Targets contributed to the achievement of the 2030 Agenda. The secretariat had participated actively in the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development, and had facilitated a number of voluntary commitments which would contribute significantly to advancing Goal 14.

38. **Ms. de Caen** (Deputy Assistant Administrator and Deputy Regional for Arab States of the United Nations Development Programme) introduced the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/72/353), which provided an update on the progress made to implement successive resolutions adopted by the General Assembly concerning the environmental disaster caused by the destruction by the Israeli Air Force on 15 July 2006 of oil storage tanks near the Jiyeh electric power plant in Lebanon. She said that the Government of the Syrian Arab Republic had provided documents with a view to reassessing the damage from the oil spill to the Syrian coastline. However, a review by the United Nations Environment Programme had concluded that those documents did not offer new findings or scientifically significant data that differed so substantially from the data used in the original study that a change in the assessment would be warranted. In June 2016, the European Union, through its grant to the Government of Lebanon signed in 2015 for the protection and sustainable development of maritime resources in Lebanon, had awarded a contract for the treatment and disposal of the remaining solid waste from the 2006 oil spill. She noted that the Government of Israel had not assumed responsibility for the compensation requested, and that the Secretary-General had again invited the international donor community to contribute to the Eastern Mediterranean Oil Spill Restoration Trust Fund, which had received no contributions to date.

39. **Mr. Rahman** (Deputy Special Representative of the World Tourism Organization Liaison Office to the United Nations), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on sustainable tourism and sustainable development in Central America (A/72/174), said that the World Tourism Organization had sought to capture the developments in Central America that advanced those Sustainable Development Goals directly related to sustainable tourism, namely Goal 8, on sustainable economic growth and full and decent employment, Goal 12, on sustainable production and consumption, and Goal 14, on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans. The report had been prepared in cooperation with countries in the region.

40. Most Central American countries had established new national policies, tourism plans, strategies, guidelines and/or programmes for the development of sustainable tourism, which took the Goals into account, and many countries in the region had also modified existing legislative or policy frameworks to support the development of sustainable tourism. In view of the rising number of natural disasters in Central America, it was noteworthy that five countries had prepared national emergency response plans.

41. Intraregional tourism was growing apace; as a result, the Governments in the region had taken steps to harmonize tourism development policies and quality standards; they were also increasingly recognizing the importance of data quality for the formulation of effective tourism policies and strategies that would maximize tourism's role in national and regional growth and development. In that connection, in 2016, the World Tourism Organization had supported the tourism branch of the Central American Integration System in the organization of a regional workshop on tourism statistics, held in Honduras. A series of six further workshops would be held in order to strengthen national statistical capacity with a view to developing Tourism Satellite Accounts.

42. International tourist arrivals for the Central American region were predicted to increase to 22 million by 2030, a figure which underscored the region's potential for continued economic development through tourism, as well as the growing significance of tourism as an instrument for social and economic inclusion. Against that backdrop, the Committee was urged to consider seriously the analyses, and particularly the recommendations, contained in the report.

43. **Ms. Gray** (Representative of the New York Office of the United National Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, UNESCO) introduced the report of the Director General of UNESCO on the implementation of education for sustainable development (A/72/130), which provided a general overview of the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 4 on education and a review of the implementation of education for sustainable development in the framework of the Global Action Programme on Education for Sustainable Development. The report concluded with considerations on the future of education for sustainable development and included some specific recommendations for the way forward. Overall the report clearly showed that education, especially education for sustainable development, was crucial for the implementation of all 17 Sustainable Development Goals. In that regard, she drew attention to the recent UNESCO publication, entitled "Education for Sustainable Development Goals: Learning Objectives", which was a useful policy guide for educators and policymakers on the integration of the Goals into the curriculum.

44. **Mr. Carey** (Officer-in-Charge of the Office of Central Support Services), introducing the report of the Secretary-General on the action plan for integrating sustainable development practices into Secretariat-wide operations and facilities management (A/72/82), said that the goal of the action plan was to create a Secretariat which, through its operations or facilities management, did not have a negative impact on the climate, as soon as possible, or by 2020, if practicable. The action plan would allow the Secretariat to contribute actively to different Sustainable Development Goals, including taking urgent action to combat climate change and ensuring sustainable consumption and production patterns. The report envisaged an overarching coordination mechanism for environmental management systems across the Secretariat. A central steering group had been established at the Secretariat and had already met in July 2017. Eventually, a network of steering groups would be established to coordinate the implementation of environmental management systems at duty stations around the world. The action plan would move the Organization from an ad hoc approach to sustainability towards an integrated and target-oriented process that struck a balance between harmonization and decentralization.

45. The renovation of United Nations Headquarters under the capital master plan had reduced energy consumption by two thirds from 2007 through 2016. The Department of Field Support had recently established an environmental strategy that included an environmental management system. A centralized policy and governance regime would maximize the impact of such efforts. The Secretariat's proposals had been guided by inputs from the United Nations System Chief Executives Board for Coordination and the Environment Management Group. With a relatively small amount of additional dedicated capacity, United Nations system resources could be better leveraged towards the 2020 target, and make the Secretariat a model for environmental sustainability.

46. **The Chair** drew attention to the report of the Joint inspection Unit on the final findings of the comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119), and the note by the Secretary-General transmitting his comments and those of the United Nations System Chief Executives Board on that report (A/72/119/Add.1).

47. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Sustainable Development Goals Report 2017 showed that progress had fallen short of expectations. He wondered what specific assistance could be provided to help meet the targets within the timelines set.

48. **Mr. Liu** Zhenmin (Under-Secretary-General for Economic and Social Affairs) said that the question could be answered with two words: "financing" and "investment". Unfortunately, neither had been forthcoming over the two previous years. Resources needed to be mobilized on the same scale as they had been for climate change.

49. **Mr. Glasser** (Special Representative of the Secretary-General for Disaster Risk Reduction) said that there was never enough money, and trade-offs were inevitable. One low-tech and low-cost measure that could have a major impact would be for the United Nations to make sure that countries fully understood their risk profiles, so that, for example, a country would not build an expensive new hospital in a location that was susceptible to climate-change-related disasters.

50. **Mr. Bukuru** (Chief, New York Liaison Office of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification secretariat) said that investing in the prevention of land degradation could serve as an accelerator for the Sustainable Development Goals. Maps of land degradation very closely tracked maps of poverty and hunger, which were the focus of Goals 1 and 2. Moreover, since the effects of land degradation were borne disproportionately by women, combating it would also contribute to Goal 5 on empowering

women. Identifying such accelerator investments could help to meet target deadlines.

51. **The Chair** invited the Committee to engage in a general discussion on the item.

52. **Mr. Morejón Pazmiño** (Ecuador), speaking on behalf of the Group of 77 and China, said that although the Group shared the generally positive tone of the report of the high-level political forum on sustainable development convened under the auspices of the Economic and Social Council at its 2017 session (E/HLPF/2017/6), it was concerned that poverty, hunger and malnutrition persisted, with trends in some regions shifting in the wrong direction. He reaffirmed the principles of the 1992 United Nations Conference on Environment and Development and the implementation principles enunciated in paragraph 74 of the 2030 Agenda. Now that the New Urban Agenda and the global indicator framework had been adopted, efforts should be focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda, the Sendai Framework, the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the New Urban Agenda. In that context, the Group wished to draw attention to the needs of developing countries — especially countries in special situations, African countries, least developed countries, landlocked developing countries and small island developing States — and the specific challenges faced by middle-income countries, conflict and post-conflict countries, and countries and peoples living under colonial and foreign occupation.

53. Realizing sustainable development would require a revitalized global partnership that prioritized enhanced support to developing countries, including development financing, technology transfer on concessional and preferential terms, targeted capacity-building and technical assistance. Success would also depend on establishing a rules-based and non-discriminatory multilateral trading system. The Group was committed to engaging constructively with development partners through action-oriented draft resolutions based on the principle of global solidarity and focusing on the needs of the poorest and most vulnerable.

54. Agenda 21, the Johannesburg Plan of Implementation and the 2030 Agenda were of particular relevance to the agenda item under consideration. While the 2030 Agenda should be the primary focus, ongoing support should be provided to existing commitments. The Group reiterated the importance of supporting the sustainable development of small island developing States through the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway).

55. A more people-centred preventive approach to disaster risk should be pursued by promoting effective, inclusive, accessible, multi-hazard and multisectoral practices. The Sendai Framework stressed the vulnerability of the least developed countries, small island developing States, landlocked developing countries and African countries, as well as middle-income countries facing specific challenges, and the need for appropriate assistance to be extended to disaster-prone countries with specific characteristics, such as archipelagic countries and countries with extensive coastlines.

56. Climate change, desertification, land degradation, drought, dust and sand storms, and loss of biodiversity were interrelated and exerted multiplier effects on each other. The international community should address those challenges through existing mechanisms such as the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification and the Convention of Biological Diversity. He urged the United Nations system to support implementation of the Ordos Declaration and the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework adopted at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification held in in Ordos, China, from 6 to 16 September 2017.

57. The Group called for inclusive and equitable quality education at all levels, including in early childhood and at the primary, secondary and tertiary stages, as well as technical and vocational training, so that everyone had access to lifelong learning opportunities that would enable them to contribute to sustainable development. Noting that many countries had accorded official recognition to the rights of nature, he welcomed the interactive dialogue on harmony with nature held by the General Assembly in commemoration of International Mother Earth Day on 21 April 2017 under the theme "Earth Jurisprudence".

58. **Mr. Locsin** (Philippines), speaking on behalf of the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), said that the ASEAN Vision 2025 on Disaster Management and the ASEAN Agreement on Disaster Management and Emergency Response complemented the Sendai Framework. At the thirtieth ASEAN Summit, held in Manila, ASEAN leaders had reaffirmed the "ASEAN Declaration on One ASEAN, One Response: ASEAN Responding to Disasters as One in the Region and Outside the Region". Disaster management was one of the priority areas of the Comprehensive Partnership between ASEAN and the United Nations. Under the Joint Strategic Plan of Action on Disaster Management, the Association was working closely with the United Nations and other

partners through the ASEAN Coordinating Centre for Humanitarian Assistance on Disaster Management. The ASEAN Secretary-General and the United Nations Under-Secretary-General for Humanitarian Affairs and Emergency Relief Coordinator had exchanged copies of an inter-operability brief at the third ASEAN Strategic Policy Dialogue on Disaster Management, held on 18 August 2017 in Singapore. On 15 September 2017, the Association had held a high-level policy dialogue on risk assessment in Manila.

59. Southeast Asia was a biodiversity hotspot with more than its share of plant and animal species. ASEAN had reaffirmed its commitment to the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets in its joint statement to the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity. The ASEAN Centre for Biodiversity, which facilitated coordination on the conservation and sustainable use of biological resources, had just established the ASEAN Biodiversity Heroes Awards. The Association also planned to enhance implementation of its ASEAN Heritage Parks programme, including through the joint Biodiversity Conservation and Management of Protected Areas Conservation programme with the European Union.

60. ASEAN was gravely concerned about the disproportionate impact of climate change on vulnerable groups, which had been highlighted in the assessment reports of the Intergovernmental Panel on Climate Change. The Association reaffirmed its commitment to the Paris Agreement and called for effective and timely implementation of all intended nationally determined contributions, and in particular support from developed countries for low-carbon and climate-resilient cities, sustainable energy technology and early warning systems in Southeast Asia. ASEAN looked forward to delivering a statement and hosting a side event at the twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties serving as the Meeting of the Parties to the Kyoto Protocol, to be held from 6 to 17 November 2017 in Bonn, Germany.

61. **Mr. Marshall** (Barbados), speaking on behalf of the Caribbean Community (CARICOM), said that the recent hurricanes that had devastated several of the Community's member States were yet another reminder of the special vulnerabilities of small island developing States to the adverse effects of climate change. It had been estimated that natural disasters were causing losses of up to 2 per cent in annual gross domestic product (GDP). The upcoming Bonn climate change conference would provide an opportunity to take action for the sake of future generations. CARICOM also looked forward to the Secretary-General's climate summit planned for 2019.

62. He urged the Committee to take considered steps to ensure full and systematic support for implementation and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway, in which small island developing States were reaffirmed as a special case for sustainable development in view of their unique and particular vulnerabilities. The Community remained fully committed to the Sendai Framework. Given the rich biodiversity of their region, CARICOM members were also committed to the goals of conservation of biological diversity, sustainable use of its components and fair and equitable sharing of its benefits, as enunciated in article 1 of the Convention on Biodiversity.

63. **Mr. Ahsan** (Bangladesh), speaking on behalf of the Group of Least Developed Countries, said that as the deadline for the Istanbul Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020 approached, GDP growth for the least developed countries remained well below the 7 per cent target. While the least developed countries continued to work to integrate the 2030 Agenda into their national policies and programmes, the international community must deliver on the resource package promised by the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, and the United Nations system must further strengthen its normative and operational support. There should be synergy between follow-up of the 2030 Agenda and the Istanbul Programme of Action. He hoped to see evidence-based discussion of the special challenges faced by the least developed countries at the next meeting of the high-level political forum.

64. Members of vulnerable groups needed to be included in implementation processes for the Sendai Framework and the Paris Agreement. The Green Climate Fund should be fully operationalized with the goal of mobilizing $100 billion per year by 2020. Clean development mechanism projects were needed by the least developed countries, and the needs of people displaced by extreme weather events should be addressed. He stressed that climate change adaptation and mitigation funds should be additional to official development assistance (ODA) commitments, and allocated in a manner that was fair, equitable and proportionate to the impact of climate change.

65. The upcoming Bonn climate change conference and the Secretary-General's climate change summit planned for 2019 should highlight the particular challenges faced by least developed countries. Among

those challenges were land degradation and desertification, which were at the root of mass migrations, political instability and social breakdown, particularly in Africa. He welcomed the report of the Secretary-General on crisis mitigation and resilience-building for the least developed countries (A/72/270), which called for the creation of a comprehensive multi-stakeholder resilience-building mechanism for the least developed countries, leveraging existing measures and initiatives.

66. Despite some progress, access to affordable energy remained a challenge for the least developed countries, especially in rural areas. That situation was partly owing to an energy mix that was tilted towards fuel-powered plants, and might improve as renewable energy technologies became more competitive, affordable and accessible.

67. **Ms. Naeem** (Maldives), speaking on behalf of the Alliance of Small Island States (AOSIS), said that the agenda sub-items under consideration reflected the interlinked challenges that small island developing States confronted daily. The recent hurricanes in the Caribbean were a reminder of the threat that those challenges posed not only to development, but to survival itself. Economic growth would not be possible if limited resources were continually directed towards rebuilding and stop-gap measures. Global cooperation on implementing the Paris Agreement was not an option but an imperative. A greener, more sustainable path to development and improved resilience across all sectors were not abstract goals but necessities.

68. The livelihood and cultural heritage of AOSIS member States depended on the conservation and sustainable use of oceans and seas. She therefore expressed appreciation to Fiji and Sweden for co-hosting the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14, and urged follow-up of the final declaration of the Conference.

69. Progress on such shared goals depended on adequate means of implementation. There was a need to move beyond consideration only of per capita GDP when determining access to concessionary financing for small island developing States. Alternative criteria should be developed that took into account unique structural vulnerabilities. Natural disaster risks did not disappear upon graduation from least developed country status. The international community should move beyond reaction mode and take real steps to improve the fiscal space for small and vulnerable economies so that resilience could be built to external shocks and the effects of climate change.

70. The Alliance took a particular interest in sub-item 19 (b) on the Samoa Pathway. Alongside the high-level political forum, the Small Island Developing States Partnership Framework was an important space for such partnership dialogues as the recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. In its comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119), the Joint Inspection Unit had found that, despite new agendas with new mandates, there had not been a corresponding increase in support to the Secretariat for their implementation. Its report had therefore recommended enhanced coordination between the Department of Economic and Social Affairs and the Office of the High Representative for the Least Developed Countries, Landlocked Developing Countries and Small Island Developing States, as well as continued mainstreaming of the Samoa Pathway. The Alliance was counting on the support of all Member States, and especially its development partners, during the Committee's consideration of that report's recommendations. Her delegation anticipated progress during the current session on preparations for the 2019 high-level midterm review of implementation of the Samoa Pathway called for by General Assembly resolution 71/225.

71. **Mr. Sisilo** (Solomon Islands), speaking on behalf of the Pacific small island developing States, said that as the escalating impacts of climate change continued to interact with the vulnerabilities of small island developing States, the conditions warranting their designation as "special cases" for sustainable development were more relevant than ever. It was critical to move forward on the Joint Inspection Unit's recommendations and preparations for the Samoa Pathway midterm review. Efforts towards sustainable development must help to build institutional capacity for nationally led programmes. The recent hurricanes had dramatically highlighted the importance of building the resilience of small island developing States to disaster shocks, in line with the Sendai Framework.

72. In its report (A/72/119), the Joint Inspection Unit had noted that access to sufficient and predictable financing was a perennial challenge for small island developing States. Given that traditional economic measurements did not take into account special vulnerabilities, a rethinking of the eligibility criteria for such financing was needed. The recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 had been a historic moment in advancing the health, productivity and resilience of oceans.

73. **Mr. Soriano Mena** (El Salvador), speaking on behalf of the Community of Latin American and Caribbean States (CELAC), said that CELAC member States were committed to achieving sustainable development in its three dimensions in a balanced and integrated way, through joint solutions that took the specific challenges and needs of countries into consideration and left no one behind.

74. CELAC recognized the high-level political forum as key for the integrated follow-up and review of the 2030 Agenda within the United Nations system. Rather than merely engaging in academic debate, the meetings of the forum held under the auspices of the General Assembly and the Economic and Social Council would provide a dynamic platform for regular dialogue. They would also be closely coordinated to ensure coherence and would provide mutually reinforcing linkages and political guidance for the achievement of sustainable development.

75. The regional dimension was important in sustainable development; linkages between the high-level political forum, regional commissions and other relevant regional bodies should therefore be strengthened. The importance of participation by civil society and other stakeholders should be recognized, while taking into account national plans and policies.

76. Implementation and follow-up of the 2030 Agenda would require the unequivocal commitment of the international community. Developed countries must honour their long-standing ODA commitments, including by establishing binding timelines for delivery of ODA, and for other forms of North-South cooperation. South-South cooperation had a particular role to play, notably in capacity-building supported by the exchange of knowledge and successful practices, as well as in other emerging forms of cooperation. An effective financing strategy would require the mobilization and effective use of new financial resources, both public and private, domestic and international.

77. In view of the region's vulnerability to climate change, CELAC emphasized the need to strengthen implementation of the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework and looked forward to the entry into force of the Sendai Framework Monitor.

78. CELAC member States would continue to promote regional measures to protect ecosystems, reduce deforestation and land degradation and, in particular, conserve and sustainably use biodiversity, notably through the mainstreaming of conservation and sustainability across relevant sectors. CELAC commended the recent progress on strengthening synergies between the various conventions related to biodiversity, and advocated the development of national biodiversity strategies to guarantee the success of the Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020 and the Aichi Biodiversity Targets.

79. CELAC rejected all unilateral economic, financial or trade measures, which were incompatible with international law and the Charter of the United Nations. Such measures hindered development finance and impeded the full achievement of economic and social development, particularly in developing countries. The CELAC countries continued to require support from the United Nations development system to implement the 2030 Agenda in accordance with their national priorities.

80. **Mr. Elisaia** (Samoa), speaking on behalf of the Pacific Islands Development Forum, said that the Samoa Pathway represented a sustainable development road map for small island developing States. The Committee had a critical role to play in the annual resolution on the Samoa Pathway, and the United Nations and the international community should assess progress and identify implementation gaps in the run-up to the Samoa Pathway midterm review. The high-level political forum could play a major role in facilitating implementation of the Samoa Pathway by providing a global platform to focus on issues of concern to small island developing States and identify challenges and structural barriers that required coordinated action at the global level.

81. The recent hurricanes had demonstrated the susceptibility of small island developing States to unpredictable setbacks. He looked forward to progress on building the resilience of those States to such shocks at the upcoming Bonn climate change conference, which would be held under the presidency of Fiji, a member of the Forum. The Forum was committed to implementing the voluntary commitments made at the recent United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

82. He urged United Nations entities to respond to calls to mainstream the 2030 Agenda in the quadrennial comprehensive policy review of operational activities for development, and welcomed the work done by United Nations funds and programmes to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into their strategic plans, noting that the Forum had a particular interest in mainstreaming the Samoa Pathway. Welcome steps had already been taken towards monitoring the progress of such mainstreaming.

83. At the Forum's forty-eighth meeting, held one month previously, leaders had endorsed the Regional Road Map for Implementing the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development in Asia and the Pacific. The 2014 Framework for Pacific Regionalism would be central to contextualizing global commitments under the 2030 Agenda and the Samoa Pathway. The Forum would continue to count on the support of the United Nations and other partners for both regional and national efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals. Capacity-building was needed across a wide range of areas, including data and statistics. Adequate and predictable funding would require simplified access to climate change finance. In that regard, he commended the pilot approval process adopted by the Green Climate Fund at its recent meeting in Cairo.

84. **Mr. Sinha** (India) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had renewed the world's faith in multilateralism and collective action. In the spirit of sharing its experiences to accelerate the implementation of the Agenda, India had been among the 42 countries that had presented voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum in July.

85. The national development goals of India were mirrored in the Sustainable Development Goals, which would be achieved through a whole-of-government approach with unity of purpose and efforts at all levels. Responsibility for overseeing the Goals had been assigned to the National Institution for Transforming India, which was chaired by the Prime Minister of India.

86. Collective efforts and inclusive growth formed the cornerstone of the national development agenda. Short-term goals in that context would be addressed by the Government's draft action agenda covering the period 2017–2020, while longer-term policy objectives would be covered by a 15-year vision.

87. Effective tracking of progress on the Sustainable Development Goals required accessible, reliable, timely and disaggregated data at all levels. He therefore welcomed the adoption of the global indicator framework and expressed appreciation for the work of the Inter-Agency and Expert Group on Sustainable Development Goal Indicators. Draft indicators for tracking the Goals in India had already been developed and placed in the public domain for wider consultation.

88. In view of the unprecedented scale of global partnership that would be needed to achieve the Goals, his delegation welcomed the Secretary-General's proposals for repositioning the United Nations development system, which included a funding compact to mobilize greater resources and correct the imbalance between core and non-core funding. For its part, India continued to expand its development partners in a spirit of South-South solidarity, including through the newly established India-United Nations Development Partnership Fund.

89. As climate change was a critical component of sustainable development, his delegation also welcomed the Secretary-General's initiative to renew the focus on climate action. The climate action plans of India reflected its strong commitment to substantially reduce greenhouse emissions, make greater use of non-fossil fuels and create additional carbon sinks. Among other initiatives, India was working with partner countries to establish the International Solar Alliance in order to facilitate the transition towards renewable energy globally.

90. India remained firmly committed to the Sendai Framework. In that context, it had hosted the Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction in New Delhi in November 2016 and the Prime Minister of India had released the National Disaster Management Plan in June 2017.

91. **Mr. Yaakob** (Malaysia) said that, as a middle-income country, Malaysia was vulnerable to being caught in the middle-income trap. In the era of the Sustainable Development Goals, the challenge was to redesign development strategies that focused on innovative, sustainable and inclusive growth while gradually shifting to higher value-added sectors. As science, technology and innovative played a crucial role in that regard, his delegation called on partners to enhance their development assistance to middle-income countries, especially the transfer of knowledge and technology.

92. Malaysia remained committed to helping other developing countries achieve the 2030 Agenda and was sharing development expertise through its national technical cooperation programme. To date, more than 32,000 participants from 143 developing countries had benefited from assistance under the programme.

93. Reaffirming his Government's commitment to implement the New Urban Agenda adopted at the United Nations Conference on Housing and Sustainable Urban Development (Habitat III), he said that Malaysia looked forward to hosting the ninth session of the World Urban Forum in Kuala Lumpur in February 2018. His country placed a high priority on developing more inclusive communities to strengthen the economy, create jobs, promote efficient energy,

protect the environment and contribute towards improved human health.

94. Malaysia had shared its development experience by presenting its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in July 2017. Specific measures had been put in place to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals in Malaysia and significant progress had already been made. However, there was still an urgent need to operationalize sustainable development for the greater good and ensure that no one was left behind.

95. **Ms. Bajana Tinoco** (Nicaragua) said that the international community must work together to achieve the 2030 Agenda on the basis of shared but differentiated responsibilities. Nicaragua prioritized poverty eradication, which would support development in harmony with Mother Earth that would ensure peace and prosperity for future generations. However, without the requisite ambition and political will, the 2030 Agenda would flounder. Developed countries must honour their ODA commitments, as well as providing new, additional and predictable financing. In addition, all coercive economic measures applied by developed countries that hindered development must be repealed.

96. The recent record high temperatures across the world, and the low levels of ambition demonstrated with regard to cutting greenhouse gas emissions, were of grave concern. Developed countries should take the lead on addressing climate change by changing their unsustainable production and consumption patterns, and fulfilling their commitments related to financing and technology transfer.

97. The Committee had a vital role to play in sustainable development. Member States should act in good faith and in solidarity in order to ensure that the current session of the General Assembly resulted in the best possible outcomes.

98. **Mr. Xu** Zhongsheng (China) said that many developing countries lacked the financial and technological means to implement the Sustainable Development Goals. North-South cooperation should be the primary focus of development partnerships, with South-South and triangular cooperation playing a complementary role. Cooperative mechanisms should be developed for disaster risk reduction and mitigation based on shared experiences, with more technical and material assistance provided by developed countries. His country had provided RMB 50 million in assistance to Mexico after that country's recent earthquake, as well as $3.8 million to the Dominican Republic and $2.5 million to Antigua and Barbuda.

99. Calling for coordinated implementation of the Paris Agreement, he said that developed countries should do more to reduce emissions and facilitate capacity-building financing and technology transfer. His country supported "win-win" cooperation on a fair and reasonable global climate change governance system. Domestically, China had made great progress on green, low-carbon development.

100. He called on the international community to provide funds and technology transfer to help affected countries build their capacities to fight desertification. In September 2017, the Chinese city of Ordos had hosted the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. That Conference had adopted the Ordos Declaration, which envisioned a target of zero net land degradation by 2030. China would also be hosting the fifteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Convention on Biological Diversity in 2020.

101. China had adopted its country programme for the 2030 Agenda, as well as the relevant progress report. In 2017, it had hosted the Belt and Road Forum for International Cooperation and the ninth Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa (BRICS) summit, both of which had focused on implementation of the 2030 Agenda. China stood ready to cooperate with all countries to promote achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals.

The meeting rose at 1 p.m.

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Chair: Mr. Jürgenson ..... (Estonia)

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The meeting was called to order at 3.05 p.m.

Agenda item 19: Sustainable development (*continued*) (A/72/75-E/2017/56, A/72/174, A/72/216, A/72/343, A/72/343/Corr.1 and A/72/353)

(a) Implementation of Agenda 21, the Programme for the Further Implementation of Agenda 21 and the outcomes of the World Summit on Sustainable Development and of the United Nations Conference on Sustainable Development (*continued*) (A/72/228)

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(e) Implementation of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa (*continued*) (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(f) Convention on Biological Diversity (*continued*) (A/72/152 and A/72/152/Corr.1)

(g) Education for sustainable development (*continued*) (A/72/130)

(h) Harmony with Nature (*continued*) (A/72/175)

(i) Ensuring access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and modern energy for all (*continued*) (A/72/156 and A/72/160)

(j) Combating sand and dust storms (*continued*)

1. **Mr. Yii** (Singapore) said that the series of devastating natural disasters across the world in the past year had underscored the urgent need to fulfil the commitments made to implement the 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development and the Paris Agreement under the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, as well as other related agreements and outcomes, in order to protect the planet and build a more resilient and sustainable future. While every country had its own priorities and challenges, each one could learn a great deal from the experience of others.

2. Singapore had learned that Governments could formulate regulations on energy efficiency and companies could design products to meet those standards, but such actions would be fruitless if individuals continued with their wasteful habits. Hence, policies must act as incentives for individuals to take the right kinds of actions. In Singapore, for example, resources had been correctly priced and the use of smart meters was encouraged to avoid waste. The national vision and plans for sustainable development were outlined in the Sustainable Singapore Blueprint.

3. Integration and cooperation between the public and private sectors was crucial in Singapore for improving efficiencies and optimizing limited resources in order to achieve sustainable development. Singapore had used public-private partnerships for a variety of projects, including water treatment plants and waste disposal facilities. For instance, a new water reclamation plant was being co-located with an integrated waste management facility to harness synergies and allow both plants to be energy self-sufficient.

4. Small pilot experiments and projects could pave the way towards new solutions. NEWater, high-grade reclaimed water produced from treated used water, was a key pillar of the national water sustainability strategy. The first pilot plant had been built in 1974, but the technology at the time had been expensive and unreliable. However, the technology had become more affordable in the late 1990s and Singapore currently had five NEWater plants, which could meet up to 40 per cent of the nation's water needs.

5. Singapore looked forward to continuing to share its experiences with other countries, including during the presentation of its voluntary national review at the 2018 high-level political forum on sustainable development. On that occasion it also looked forward to in-depth reviews of Sustainable Development Goal 6, on clean water and sanitation, Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, Goal 11, on sustainable cities and communities, Goal 12, on responsible consumption and production, Goal 15, on life on land, and Goal 17, on partnerships for the Goals.

6. **Mr. Momeni** (Islamic Republic of Iran) said that the Sustainable Development Goals could be achieved only if countries had adequate means of implementation. The United Nations should play a critical coordinating role in strengthening the global partnership for sustainable development and in enhancing cooperation and partnership at the regional and international levels. Over the next few months the

United Nations system, taking into account the different needs and priorities of developing countries, would need to align its work to support their achievement of the Goals.

7. The United Nations regional commissions played an important role in promoting the achievement of the Goals at the regional and subregional levels. Close cooperation among the commissions merited further exploration and his delegation supported innovative ideas that enhanced regional and subregional cooperation through the regional commissions.

8. The Islamic Republic of Iran attached great importance to achieving sustainable development at the national and regional levels. Sustainable development issues were among its national priorities, including enhancing public health. The overarching aim in that regard was to achieve universal health coverage in the country by 2025. Another major challenge was climate change, for which plans and programmes had been developed to move towards a low carbon economy. In particular, sand and dust storms posed a serious challenge to the sustainable development of affected countries, especially in Asia and Africa. The United Nations must urgently take appropriate steps to advance regional and international cooperation and provide effective support to address that issue.

9. Sustainable development and peace went hand in hand. As conflict and extremism in the world had increased in recent years, it was extremely important to find effective solutions to the challenges facing countries and regions, particularly the most pressing ones in the Middle East, in order for the Sustainable Development Goals to be achieved.

10. **Ms. Kharashun** (Belarus) said that sustainable development issues were a priority for Belarus, where consistent efforts were under way to raise public awareness about the 2030 Agenda. The National Coordinator for Achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, a post established by the President of Belarus, was in charge of the National Council for Sustainable Development, which provided a platform for intersectoral exchange and the discussion of progress. The National Coordinator had presented the voluntary national review of Belarus to the high-level political forum in July 2017 and had cited specific examples of the practical steps being taken to achieve the Goals. Belarus intended to make use of parliamentary hearings and national consultations with the participation of a broad range of partners, including civil society, as part of its process of implementing the 2030 Agenda.

11. Regional entities were an important connective link in global and national work on sustainable development. The United Nations regional commissions, particularly the Economic Commission for Europe, played a significant role in mobilizing political leadership and promoting partnerships.

12. Partnerships among national coordinators for achieving the Goals would help to optimize multilateral initiatives for sustainable development and also to counter related global threats and challenges. In that context, Belarus planned to host a 2018 regional forum for coordinators of the Goals in Central and Eastern European countries and in the Commonwealth of Independent States. The forum would provide the impetus for an international network to be established, under the auspices of the United Nations, of national coordinators for the Goals. Her delegation also proposed that the Department of Economic and Social Affairs should establish a United Nations database of national mechanisms for achieving the Goals, which would help to ensure effective cooperation among Member States in the future..

13. The United Nations system had an important role to play in establishing partnerships to harness the potential of States. In particular, increased international cooperation was needed to support the capacity-building efforts of middle-income countries. The Sustainable Development Goals would not be achieved without due attention to their special needs and interests.

14. The Technology Facilitation Mechanism was an important part of the new development agenda and Belarus stood ready to participate constructively in that process. The Mechanism must continue to be truly democratic, open to all interested countries and focused on the common good. In addition, particular attention within that framework should be paid to energy. Energy was intrinsically linked to climate change, economic growth, food security and all global challenges. It would be logical to consider establishing a comprehensive United Nations energy agenda that took into account the interests of all States, including in the areas of technology transfer and increased energy efficiency.

15. Belarus was interested in continuing its joint work with the intergovernmental organizations that comprised the United Nations Inter-Agency Task Force on Chernobyl. Rehabilitation of the areas affected by the Chernobyl disaster must continue to occupy an important place on the international agenda.

16. **Mr. Kononuchenko** (Russian Federation) said that his delegation had noted the usefulness of the

recommendations prepared by the Joint Inspection Unit and contained in its comprehensive review of United Nations system support for small island developing States (A/72/119). In order to coordinate international cooperation for the implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway (Samoa Pathway), it was important for the steering committee on partnerships for small island developing States and the global multi-stakeholder small island developing States partnership dialogue to continue their work. His delegation welcomed the use of interactive platforms to publicize information about the work of partnerships to implement the Samoa Pathway and also regarding the voluntary commitments entered into at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14: Conserve and sustainably use the oceans, seas and marine resources for sustainable development.

17. Natural disasters remained a serious threat to sustainable development. Climate change adaptation measures must continue to be developed and implemented, irrespective of the underlying causes. The Russian Federation was continuing to increase its assistance to island States, in accordance with the Samoa Pathway and the 2030 Agenda, and was partnering with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) to finance the implementation of a project for regional disaster resilience in the Pacific small island developing States.

18. Increased efforts would be needed to reach the targets outlined in the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030, particularly by 2020. The main role in that regard should be played by national crisis centres and disaster risk reduction centres. The Russian Federation supported strengthening the network links among those centres and ensuring the operational exchange of information for a timely disaster response.

19. Efforts to combat climate change depended on verified scientific data and the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change was the main platform for the substantive consideration of climate related issues. The development of an action plan to implement the Paris Agreement was a priority objective.

20. The Russian Federation was preparing the legislative framework for the ratification of the Paris Agreement. It had also begun to develop a long-term low-greenhouse gas emission development strategy and a national climate change adaptation plan, among other efforts.

21. Within the framework of the Russia-UNDP Trust Fund for Development, a Climate Change Window had been established to finance projects that included enhancing energy efficiency in the countries of the Eurasian Economic Union, building capacities to fight forest fires in Armenia, increasing resilience to climate change in Tajikistan, and strengthening sustainable water resource planning and management in Santiago de Cuba.

22. In order to ensure common access to energy by 2030, it would be necessary both to enhance the effective use of traditional fuels and to increase the share of renewable sources of energy. Accordingly, Russia was carrying out measures to enhance energy efficiency and modernize the energy sector. Currently about 40 per cent of electricity in Russia was generated from non-carbon sources and its level of coal generation was one of the lowest among the major industrialized countries. By 2024, approximately 6 gigawatts of new capacity would be introduced from solar, wind and small hydroelectric stations. Particular attention was also being paid to the development of green projects in remote and isolated areas.

23. The President of the Russian Federation had declared 2017 the Year of the Environment. Russia currently had more than 12,000 protected areas, covering over 232.5 million hectares or 13 per cent of the country. It had significant experience of protecting biological diversity. Notable measures planned in 2017 and beyond included extending wildlife preserves, improving household waste management systems and conserving water and forest resources.

24. **Ms. Rodríguez Abascal** (Cuba) said that unacceptable levels of poverty, discrimination and social inequality persisted, even within industrialized nations, and the gap between North and South was widening. The planet's scarce natural resources continued to be used inefficiently and indiscriminately to maintain unsustainable patterns of production and consumption. Despite the adoption of the Millennium Development Goals and the Sustainable Development Goals, clearly insufficient progress had been made to date and there was still no sign of a fair and definitive solution to those ongoing problems. The Committee should at least discuss the root causes of that situation and how to build the political will necessary for the developed countries to live up to their historic commitments and responsibilities.

25. Sustainable development required greater common efforts, based on coherent and inclusive policies, a revitalized global partnership, the effective mobilization of financial resources and an enabling

environment at all levels. More capacity-building was also needed, including enhancing statistical capacities and promoting technology transfer to developing countries.

26. The United Nations system should prioritize poverty eradication as the greatest global challenge and as a prerequisite for sustainable development. To that end, its effective assistance to States should be increased to ensure the balanced and integrated implementation of the 2030 Agenda so that no one was left behind. That maxim also meant recognizing and respecting the diverse approaches, visions, models and instruments decided upon by all countries while exercising their right to self-determination and in light of their different circumstances and national priorities.

27. A new record had been set for global average surface temperature in 2016, for the third year in a row, and the 2017 Atlantic hurricane season had been the most destructive one since 2005. It was clear that climate change posed a threat to sustainable development and to human survival. Cuba was committed to implementing the Paris Agreement and also urged the States parties thereto to work to fulfil their undertakings and to broaden its scope on the basis of common but differentiated responsibilities, while recognizing the vulnerabilities of the least developed countries, especially small island States.

28. **Ms. Shurbaji** (Syrian Arab Republic) said that two years after the adoption of the 2030 Agenda, exceptional geopolitical and economic circumstances were impeding many States' efforts to promote sustainable development. Although her Government continued to strive to promote development for the Syrian people, its efforts were being undermined by economic sanctions, the brutal terrorist war being waged against Syria, and the killings and other crimes perpetrated by the so-called international coalition against Syrian civilians and the country's infrastructure.

29. With the support of their allies, the Syrian armed forces were continuing their fight against terrorist groups, which were armed, financed and supported in other ways by certain States, despite those States' repeated assertions to the contrary. In order to promote development, all States must fulfil their obligations under Security Council resolutions on combating terrorism and must avoid double standards and selectivity.

30. Syria had adopted a people-centred approach in its efforts to foster sustainable development, and would continue to work with UNDP to that end. Her Government believed that creating opportunities, and not just providing assistance, was the key to the success of sustainable development strategies; it was also essential that the international community and the United Nations took into consideration the particular circumstances of individual countries when designing development initiatives.

31. The Sustainable Development Goals could not be achieved while States insisted on adopting politicized agendas, in contravention of the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations. Syria urged the international community to provide unconditional support to its development initiatives, as well as to its emergency relief efforts. However, until the unilateral economic sanctions imposed on the Syrian people were lifted, it would be difficult to move beyond emergency relief initiatives designed to meet the urgent needs of the Syrian people and, instead, focus on fostering economic growth and rebuilding the country's infrastructure, education, healthcare and other sectors.

32. Turning to the report of the Secretary-General on the oil slick on Lebanese shores (A/72/353), she underscored that that oil slick was just one of many negative repercussions of the aggressive behaviour of Israel. The international community must ensure that the Israeli occupation authorities were held legally and morally responsible for their repeated violations of international law, including relevant United Nations resolutions.

33. **Ms. Picco** (Monaco) said that her country had always attached priority attention to the implementation of United Nations environmental conventions. Monaco was therefore particularly concerned by the lack of capacities to implement the Strategic Plan for Biological Diversity 2011–2020, especially in developing countries.

34. The Monaco Explorations Campaign was an example of an innovative project that prioritized cooperation with scientists and researchers, who were invited from all over the world to participate in targeted programmes on board the Yersin, a travelling research platform circumnavigating the globe for a period of three years.

35. Cognizant of the need to build the resilience of small island developing States, Monaco had been working for several years on a mangrove restoration project with Ole Siosiomaga Society Incorporated, a non-governmental organization based in Samoa. Owing to its long-standing commitment to marine protected areas, whose economic and social links to sustainable tourism were now recognized, Monaco had also been

working for many years with the International Union for Conservation of Nature.

36. In the context of the International Year of Sustainable Tourism for Development, Monaco had been promoting low-impact tourism, intermodal transport and a campaign to reduce marine waste, among other environmental protection measures.

37. The considerable progress made on disaster risk reduction since the adoption of the Sendai Framework was welcome. For its part, Monaco had set up a system that alerted the population to climate events, marine pollution and technological and seismic risks.

38. Monaco was a party to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change and had ratified the Paris Agreement in 2016. Its contribution to the Climate Green Fund over the period 2016–2017 amounted to 26 euros per capita.

39. Having received the European Energy Award in 2014, Monaco now aimed to halve its greenhouse gas emissions by 2030, when compared with 1990 levels, and to reach carbon neutrality by 2050. Those new goals would require quadrupling the progress made to date and, to that end, the Mission for Energy Transition had published an energy transition white paper in March 2017.

40. **Mr. Rahmanto** (Indonesia) said that the global commitments made to achieve sustainable development would first of all require a revitalized global partnership in order to accelerate the implementation process, including through the use of science, technology and innovation.

41. Second, effective and sustainable technical assistance and capacity-building would be needed. In that regard, South-South and triangular cooperation could help to build a sense of national ownership and inclusivity as those cooperation programmes were attuned to national development priorities.

42. Third, maximum use should be made of the United Nations and its agencies as the drivers of sustainable development. At the global level, the high-level political forum and the General Assembly could serve as venues for cross-learning and problem-solving. Such multilateral forums provided opportunities to share best practices and experiences so that local stakeholders could shorten their learning curves.

43. Strong leadership would be needed to implement the various international commitments that had been agreed. For its part, Indonesia had been consistent in implementing sustainable development policies, including the Government's moratorium on new forest concessions and its renewable energy policy.

44. Lastly, he invited Member States to participate in a meeting of the Archipelagic and Island States Forum, to be held in 2018, where concrete actions would be put forward pertaining to such issues as climate change adaptation and mitigation and Sustainable Development Goal 14, on life below water.

45. **Ms. Ataeva** (Turkmenistan) said that the Sustainable Development Goals were a key area of strategic cooperation between Turkmenistan and the United Nations. In 2015, following comprehensive work with United Nations representatives, the Government of Turkmenistan had selected and approved 17 Goals, 148 targets and 193 indicators. A corresponding national implementation mechanism had been established, as well as a training and methodology centre for the Goals.

46. Her delegation would continue to actively assist in the implementation of General Assembly resolutions 69/213 and 70/197 on international transport and transit corridors. In November 2016, the Secretary-General had convened the first Global Sustainable Transport Conference, which had been hosted by Turkmenistan and had made a significant contribution towards implementing those resolutions. Turkmenistan had subsequently held informal consultations to discuss the draft resolution entitled "Strengthening the connection between all modes of transport to achieve Sustainable Development Goals", which had been submitted to the Second Committee for its consideration at the current session. She called on Member States to support the draft resolution, which would make transport safer and more reliable.

47. Turkmenistan would hold the chairmanship of the Energy Charter Conference in 2017. Within that framework, it would step up its efforts to develop a new international legal instrument on sustainable energy and would actively participate in creating the conditions necessary to diversify energy sources and energy supply routes.

48. As Turkmenistan currently held the chairmanship of the International Fund for Saving the Aral Sea, it wished to hold a summit of Heads of State of its founding members in 2018 together with such specialized agencies as UNDP, the United Nations Environment Programme and the United Nations Regional Centre for Preventive Diplomacy for Central Asia.

49. Turkmenistan supported the Paris Agreement and would continue to participate in international efforts

aimed at environmental protection, water resource management and the mitigation of natural and man-made disasters, among other measures.

50. **Ms. Nipomici** (Moldova) said that, despite impressive global commitments to implement the 2030 Agenda, the report of the Secretary-General on progress towards the Sustainable Development Goals (E/2017/66) clearly stated that advancements had been uneven across regions. His comprehensive review showed that much more needed to be done to eradicate poverty, eliminate hunger, ensure healthy lives for all, achieve gender equality, foster innovation and build sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

51. Owing to the complexity of the 2030 Agenda, greater use would need to be made of innovations and information technology. The multi-stakeholder forum on science, technology and innovation for the Sustainable Development Goals and the related Action Event on Innovations and Connectivity held earlier in 2017 had provided Member States with a good opportunity to share best practices and engage in substantive discussions with leading innovators and technology companies. In that regard, the United Nations should play an active role by further facilitating cooperation between Governments and the science, technology and innovation sector and by helping to replicate best practices in the use of innovations to support the Goals at the national level.

52. Enhanced international cooperation would be required to ensure that no one was left behind, including greater involvement of international financial institutions, the private sector and philanthropic organizations in securing the resources and building the capacities required to achieve the Goals. A good example for others to follow had been set at the 2017 Global Infrastructure Forum by multilateral development banks, which had agreed to encourage private sector investment in vital infrastructure and to support public-private partnerships.

53. A more accountable, transparent and results-oriented United Nations system was critical for building the capacities that Member States required, leveraging partnerships and fostering a whole-of-society approach in the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. In that regard, her delegation supported reform of the United Nations development system, as proposed by the Secretary-General. It also looked forward to his final report on that subject, which should contain concrete recommendations to improve collective support for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda.

54. Women and girls were also crucial contributors to sustainable development. A greater focus on achieving gender equality and empowering women and girls therefore remained essential to ensure progress across all the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

55. Moldova, with the support of its development partners, would shortly be issuing its national development strategy, called Moldova 2030. The strategy, which would be fully aligned with the Goals and other international commitments, would be a road map to implement an effective reform agenda for the benefit of all.

56. Her Government shared the concerns expressed by many Member States about the impact of climate change on efforts to achieve sustainable development. Moldova had submitted its nationally determined contribution in the context of the Paris Agreement in September 2015.

57. **Ms. Ochir** (Mongolia) said that, two years into the implementation of the 2030 Agenda, active engagement of multiple stakeholders remained essential for the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. The critical role of the high-level political forum as the global platform for follow-up and review had been confirmed. The forum had firmly established itself as a space for considering challenges and structural barriers that required global coordinated action. In that context, her delegation reiterated the fundamental importance of financing for development, technology transfer, capacity-building and a revitalized and enhanced global partnership, as envisaged in the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda of the Third International Conference on Financing for Development.

58. Her delegation welcomed the recommendations developed by the Technology Facilitation Mechanism, including on scaling up smart investment by Governments, the private sector and other partners to build productive and human capacity for science, technology and innovation to unlock creative potential. It also looked forward to the 2019 edition of the Global Sustainable Development Report, in which the science-policy interface would be strengthened to provide a strong evidence-based instrument to support policymakers in successfully implementing the 2030 Agenda.

59. The Mongolia Sustainable Development Vision 2030, adopted in February 2016, included such goals as ending all forms of poverty in the country, transforming Mongolia into an upper- middle-income country and promoting green development while building a strong and transparent governance system.

Those goals had also been mainstreamed into the Government's action plan for the period 2016–2020, the national action programme on climate change and other important policy documents. With a view to ensuring greater policy coherence, the Government was currently drafting a medium-term plan on the Sustainable Development Goals in which targets and indicators would be identified, development models designed and actions determined for cross-sectoral coordination and synergy.

60. As part of its follow-up to the Sendai Framework, the parliament of Mongolia had approved a number of policy documents on disaster risk reduction. Disaster risk management would be reformed by creating a legal environment for the establishment of national and local disaster risk reduction platforms, by clearly defining the roles and responsibilities of multiple stakeholders and by reinforcing the legal status for organizing emergency management. A range of national disaster risk reduction programmes and plans had also been adopted in 2015 and a draft medium-term national disaster risk reduction strategy had been developed in line with the four priorities for action contained in the Sendai Framework. Mongolia was expanding its cooperation on disaster risk reduction with both bilateral and multilateral partners. As the host of the 2018 Asian Ministerial Conference on Disaster Risk Reduction, the Government of Mongolia, in conjunction with the United Nations Office for Disaster Risk Reduction, had co-organized the International Strategy for Disaster Reduction Asia Partnership meeting of 2017.

61. Voluntary national reviews at the high-level political forum provided an important platform for Member States to share their experiences of implementing the 2030 Agenda. It might be helpful to draw up a summary of best practice and lessons learned from the reviews.

62. **Mr. Dewar** (Mexico) said that sustainable development achievements, such as the 2030 Agenda, the Paris Agreement and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda, had inspired renewed confidence in multilateralism. However, to build on the momentum created by those major agreements it was important to move from words to deeds. For its part, Mexico was making progress on implementation through specific actions that were fully aligned with those instruments and based on the premise of leaving no one behind.

63. The cross-cutting nature of the Sustainable Development Goals must transform the way in which public policies were designed and implemented. For example, economic development could not be achieved without an improvement in social conditions, and unless natural resources and ecosystem services were used sustainably.

64. As part of its commitment, Mexico had established a national council for the 2030 Agenda which transcended government administrations. That had been possible thanks to the active participation of the three branches of government as well as private enterprise, academia and international agencies. While Mexico had presented its voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2016, it had decided to present a second review in 2018 in order to share the progress made by its strategies to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

65. Recognition of the environmental dimension of sustainable development had been one of the major innovations of the 2030 Agenda. Mexico agreed with the overwhelming majority of the international community regarding the need for continued implementation of the Paris Agreement. Environmental damage had a global impact with major socioeconomic consequences and progress must therefore be made on disaster risk reduction. A major step forward in that regard was the tool for measuring progress on the Sendai Framework indicators, adopted at the fifth session of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction, held in Cancun, Mexico.

66. It was also important to prioritize biodiversity in the international agenda. As the Chair of the thirteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, Mexico was concerned by the slow pace of progress made towards the achieving the Aichi Biodiversity Targets by 2020.

67. Lastly, Mexico welcomed the Global Pact for the Environment, an initiative proposed by France that could help to improve the mainstreaming of environmental issues into the 2030 Agenda.

68. **Mr. AlGhunaim** (Saudi Arabia) said that his Government was striving to ensure inclusive and equitable quality education and to promote lifelong learning opportunities for all. To that end, and in line with the Saudi Vision 2030, the Government was taking action to ensure that every child enjoyed access to high-quality education. His country was also investing heavily in higher education and had opened several new universities in recent years. It was, moreover, striving to foster innovation and creativity while also ensuring that university curriculums and academic research were in line with the needs of the labour market and the country's priorities. Furthermore, in 2005, the Saudi Government had launched the Custodian of the Two Holy Mosques

Foreign Scholarship Programme, which enabled Saudi students to study abroad at the world's foremost universities.

69. The Saudi Government and people acknowledged the importance of the 2030 Agenda, and the Sustainable Development Goals had been incorporated into the country's school and university curriculums. The Ministry of Education would make use of educational tools developed by the United Nations Children's Fund and the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization when making any further improvements to the country's academic curriculums and programmes.

70. **Mr. Gertze** (Namibia) said that, in implementing the 2030 Agenda to ensure that no one was left behind, developing countries faced many challenges, particularly from climate change. The highest political commitment was therefore needed from the international community to the Paris Agreement in order to support the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals for all, especially developing countries and small and vulnerable States. States parties to the Agreement that had not yet done so should deposit their instruments of ratification as soon as possible.

71. Africa was the continent most affected by desertification, land degradation and drought, which reduced land productivity and could lead to increased poverty, famine and migration, among other consequences. As those phenomena would adversely impact socioeconomic development gains, efforts to address them must be prioritized and implemented in line with the African Union's Agenda 2063 and the 2030 Agenda.

72. As droughts in Namibia had impacted the economy of Namibia and had negatively affected its development achievements, drought mitigation was a priority that had been incorporated in the Namib Declaration on a stronger United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification for a land degradation neutral world. Furthermore, in partnership with the African Union and the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification in Those Countries Experiencing Serious Drought and/or Desertification, Particularly in Africa, Namibia had hosted the first ever Africa Drought Conference in August 2016. That event had resulted in the adoption of two major outputs: the Strategic Framework for Drought Management and Enhancing Resilience in Africa; and the Windoek Declaration for Enhancing Resilience to Droughts in Africa.

73. In addition to promoting sustainable land management and restoring degraded land in order to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Namibia advocated for the development of a binding protocol on drought management under the auspices of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification. It would therefore call for a decision of the parties to the Convention to set that process in motion.

74. In conclusion, his delegation welcomed the development of the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification, the establishment of the Land Degradation Neutrality Fund and the adoption of the Ordos Declaration at the thirteenth session of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention, held in September 2017 in Ordos, China.

75. **Mr. Al-Marri** (Qatar) said that, for the international community to achieve further progress in its implementation of the 2030 Agenda, it must forge stronger global partnerships and take into account the different priorities and needs of individual countries, especially the least developed countries.

76. His country was convinced that ensuring the provision of inclusive and equitable quality education, building capacities and promoting a culture of peace, tolerance and non-violence could accelerate the achievement of the Sustainable Development Goals. Qatar was therefore according priority attention to enhancing educational programmes and ensuring that everyone, especially young people, enjoyed access to high-quality education and skills training. His country was developing and supporting innovative educational programmes and initiatives both within the country and abroad, including the Education Above All initiative, which aimed to uphold children's right to education in crisis- and conflict-stricken regions, and the Educate a Child initiative, which had provided high-quality primary education to millions of children worldwide. His country firmly rejected all attempts to politicize education and disrupt students' studies and he called on all States to uphold students' rights, in accordance with international instruments.

77. The promotion of sustainable development required the creation of safe, peaceful and inclusive societies. To that end, Qatar had played a leading role in establishing the Global Alliance for Reporting Progress on Promoting Peaceful, Just and Inclusive Societies. It was also crucial to address the challenges posed by climate change and promote the use of clean and renewable energy sources.

78. Sustainable development lay at the core of the Qatar National Vision 2030, which had established ke

social, economic and human development targets. Qatar had, moreover, integrated the 2030 Agenda in its national development strategy for the years 2017 to 2022. As a result of its successful programmes and policies to promote human development, Qatar ranked first in the Arab world on the UNDP human development index and thirty-third in the world.

79. **Ms. Cedano** (Dominican Republic) said that climate change posed an existential threat to communities, countries and cultures. Hurricanes Maria and Irma had recently caused lives to be lost in the Caribbean region and considerable damage to be inflicted on its infrastructure. Hurricane Nate had then caused flooding, landslides and large numbers of fatalities in several countries in Central America. Those events were a clear sign of the need to listen to nature and better understand the new kinds of challenges to international peace and security now facing the world.

80. Rising sea levels due to global warming had a direct impact on living conditions, causing population displacement, increased competition over resources and thus greater national and regional instability. Small island developing States were particularly affected and, unless urgent action was taken, much larger countries would also eventually be impacted, thereby jeopardizing international peace and security.

81. In a changing environment it was crucial not only to mainstream disaster risk reduction into development programmes but also to consider the effects and particular challenges of growing global urbanization. Furthermore, the security problems associated with climate change must be recognized in time to take swift, joint and decisive action.

82. The Committee should send a clear message of unity in supporting the joint action required for small island developing States to implement the 2030 Agenda and achieve the Sustainable Development Goals.

83. **Mr. Ngo** Gia Thuan (Viet Nam) said that one impact of climate change was an increased risk of natural disasters, as demonstrated most recently by three consecutive hurricanes in the Atlantic Ocean. While progress had been made in the two years since the implementation of the Sendai Framework, the international community required a coherent, integrated and collective response to natural disasters in line with the 2030 Agenda and the Paris Agreement. His delegation therefore welcomed the efforts of the Global Platform for Disaster Risk Reduction and the adoption of the Asia Regional Plan for Implementation of the Sendai Framework in November 2016.

84. Viet Nam had taken a number of proactive measures to address climate change, with invaluable support from various United Nations agencies. Such measures included accelerating public education and training on disaster risk reduction, supplementing the regulatory framework and national policies on disaster risk preparedness, and developing a national strategy on climate change.

85. His delegation wished to propose some ideas to reduce disaster risks in the coming years. First, as disaster risk reduction was critical for achieving the 2030 Agenda, it needed to be addressed more broadly in the context of the Sustainable Development Goals. Disaster risk reduction should also be incorporated into the strategic plans of United Nations entities. Second, while the United Nations system should continue to support the developing countries frequently affected by natural disasters, priority should be given to enhancing their resilience. Third, responsibilities for disaster risk reduction should be shared among both public and private stakeholders and it was critical to leverage partnerships across all sectors.

86. **Mr. Safah** (Iraq) said that education was the cornerstone of sustainable development and that, to achieve their Sustainable Development Goals, States required a skilled workforce to help build strong, peaceful and secure societies and promote economic and social stability. States must forge a global partnership to promote education and endeavour to raise awareness of the 2030 Agenda by ensuring that sustainable development was addressed in school and university curriculums.

87. Iraq deeply appreciated the support of the General Assembly in its war against terrorist gangs belonging to Islamic State in Iraq and the Levant (ISIL) and its support for the unity and territorial integrity of Iraq. His Government called on the international community to support its reconstruction efforts so that it could, inter alia, rebuild the country's education infrastructure in liberated areas.

88. A signatory to the Paris Agreement, Iraq had participated actively in the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in 2016 in Marrakech, Morocco. He called on developed States to fulfil their obligation under the Paris Agreement to help more vulnerable States address the effects of climate change.

89. Even in the face of the decline in economic growth brought about by the vicious assault on Iraq by ISIL, his country was seeking to reduce its carbon dioxide emissions, in line with its national priorities

and development plans. As it was, Iraq had been responsible for less than 0.2 per cent of global greenhouse gas emissions between 1990 and 2011. Nonetheless, Iraq had adopted an ambitious plan to reduce its emissions by 14 per cent by the year 2035. It had been an early adopter of clean and renewable energy sources and environmentally-friendly carbon management regimes, and was striving to expand the country's green spaces. It was also planning to introduce petroleum gas for automobiles and convert some of its electricity generation plants into combined-cycle plants with a view to increasing their efficiency.

90. Addressing climate change would require a collective international effort based on the Paris Agreement and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. Iraq urged the international community to provide it with the economic assistance it needed at that critical juncture in its history and underscored that the country's ongoing economic crisis, which stemmed from the fall in global oil prices, the extremely high cost of the war against ISIL and the cost of rebuilding heavily-damaged cities in liberated areas, meant that, without such assistance, the country would have few resources available to carry out its ambitious climate-related agenda.

91. **Mr. Mangisi** (Tonga), welcoming the report of the Secretary-General entitled "Follow-up to and implementation of the SIDS Accelerated Modalities of Action (SAMOA) Pathway and the Mauritius Strategy for the Further Implementation of the Programme of Action for the Sustainable Development of Small Island Developing States" (A/72/214), said that his delegation was heartened that the report reflected the successes achieved by several partnerships for small island development States. Nevertheless, a lack of adequate and sustainable means of implementation remained a common challenge for those States and compromised their ability to achieve all three dimensions of development.

92. As one of the countries most vulnerable to natural disasters, Tonga continued to attach high priority to mainstreaming strategies for mitigation and adaptation through such international agreements as the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework, and also through its own national strategy for building climate resilience. By 2030, for example, Tonga had committed to doubling its marine protected areas and to reducing its reliance on fossil fuel for power generation by 70 percent. Furthermore, in view of the importance of biodiversity to the livelihood and well-being of its people, Tonga was stepping up the implementation of its commitments under the Convention on Biological Diversity and initiating voluntary efforts in the spirit of the recently held United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14.

93. Full and equal access to quality education at all levels also constituted a prerequisite for achieving sustainable development. The largest share of the national budget was therefore allocated to education, followed by health.

94. To further strengthen international and regional cooperation on sustainable energy, which was recognized as playing a critical role in the pursuit of sustainable development, Tonga had recently established the Pacific Centre for Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency. The Centre would support Pacific island countries and territories to advance their respective priorities and commitments for achieving sustainable energy.

95. Tonga was grateful for the assistance provided by UNDP in establishing a national monitoring mechanism for review and follow-up of the Samoa Pathway. It also recognized the vital role of the high-level political forum in monitoring and following up on the commitments made to small island developing States in the context of the 2030 Agenda and the Addis Ababa Action Agenda. The international community, including multilateral development banks, the United Nations system and other relevant stakeholders, should continue to provide small island developing States with the crucial support they required to address their specific vulnerabilities.

96. **Mr. Bilan** (Ukraine) said that Ukraine was fully committed to achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, despite the current challenges to its stability and security from external aggression, and was continuing to work towards meeting targets in such areas as improving the quality of education, promoting gender equality and ensuring environmental sustainability. While defence expenses accounted for more than 5 per cent of the gross domestic product of Ukraine, his Government was implementing ambitious reform projects that included fighting corruption, promoting judicial reform, enhancing the investment climate and advancing decentralization.

97. Ukraine was also fully committed to its obligations under the Paris Agreement and, in that context, had been the first European country to deposit its instrument of ratification with the United Nations. There was no doubt that climate change mitigation was an essential component of sustainable development.

98. However, no country could achieve sustainable development without peace and security. His country knew first-hand the cost of conflict in daily life. He therefore wished to recall that, as universal goals, sustainable development and peaceful conflict resolution were inextricably linked.

99. **Ms. Loe** (Norway) said that achieving the Sustainable Development Goals would require macroeconomic issues to be included in the discussion of how to integrate the three dimensions of sustainable development.

100. Climate change would affect populations across the world, as was clear from the recent hurricanes in the Caribbean, the extreme flooding in Asia and continuing fatal droughts in Africa. Both directly and indirectly, climate change was the great multiplier, aggravating poverty, damaging education, reducing health and food security and increasing the risk of conflicts and mass migration, particularly in fragile States. Without urgent action to combat it, climate change could undermine all other efforts for sustainable development. In that regard, prevention was important. The Sendai Framework provided clear targets and priorities for reducing disaster risk by 2030.

101. However, it would not be enough to address living conditions on land. The sound management and sustainable use of the oceans was another crucial part of the work needed to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, especially given the huge potential of the oceans for economic growth and human progress.

102. Clean and renewable energy was the dominant contributor to combating climate change, since it could simultaneously advance the global agenda on several fronts. More than 1 billion people still had no access to electricity, while more than 3 billion were forced to cook with polluting and inefficient fuels. Without rapid progress on Goal 7, on affordable and clean energy, it would be impossible to deliver on the other Goals.

103. A holistic and integrated approach was the key to making progress. National targets would only be reached by forging a true global partnership for development.

104. **Mr. Mohamed** (Maldives) said that his country's tradition of sustainability informed its approach to the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. Based on a broad set of priorities rooted in traditional practices, the Maldives had already taken steps to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals into its national policy instruments, with a focus on gender empowerment, inclusive and equitable economic growth, sustainable consumption and building resilience at the national and local levels.

105. As reported in its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum, his Government had embarked on an ambitious transition to a low-carbon economy: by 2018, a target of 30 per cent had been set for national energy consumption from renewable sources. Furthermore, as Chair of the Alliance of Small Island States and in collaboration with the International Renewable Energy Agency, the Maldives had launched the Initiative for Renewable Island Energy and was currently hosting a meeting of energy ministers of small island States to support their transition to renewable energy and increased energy efficiency.

106. The recently held United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14 had made a valuable contribution towards building the necessary political momentum. In that regard, his delegation welcomed both the call for action contained in General Assembly resolution 71/312 and the voluntary commitments that had emerged from the Conference. The Maldives had itself made nine such commitments.

107. For the Maldives, sustainable development was inherently linked to the oceans, which were the backbone of the country's tourism and fisheries industries. Sustainable, small-scale fisheries that employed traditional pole and line fishing contributed to poverty eradication, employment and decent work, while tourism, the country's largest industry, was often cited as a prime example of sustainable tourism.

108. However, despite its best intentions, the Maldives, like many other small island developing States, lacked sufficient technical and human capacity, particularly with regard to data collection analysis and the preparation of baseline data for the Sustainable Development Goal indicators. He therefore called for strengthened efforts from development partners with relevant expertise and encouraged coordinated efforts from the relevant United Nations agencies to boost the capacity of small island States.

109. **Mr. Chaves** (Timor-Leste) said that his Government aimed to make Timor-Leste a prosperous and strong upper-middle-income country through its strategic development plan for the period 2011–2030. As a country that had previously known conflict, Timor-Leste understood that development was impossible without peace and viewed peacebuilding, State-building and environmental protection as the foundations for sustainable development.

110. One of the major challenges the country faced, in addition to a series of deficits stemming from the lack of qualified human resources and its vulnerability to natural hazards and climate change, was its high dependence on oil revenues, which powered close to 90 per cent of its economy. Official development assistance to the country had dropped substantially since 2012, to approximately 5.8 per cent of its gross national income. That decline required the more cost-effective and strategic use of current revenues and a stronger, more diversified non-oil economy based on agriculture, tourism, manufacturing and other private sector enterprises. Steps were being taken towards more inclusive development, which meant decentralizing budgetary power to municipalities and expanding the reach of public services to support rural development programmes and job creation.

111. In order to reduce reliance on its petroleum fund and ensure fiscal sustainability, Timor-Leste was increasing the use of concessional borrowing to finance front-loaded infrastructure spending. The Government was also working to strengthen the rule of law in national legislation as a way of supporting the full realization of all human rights and fundamental freedoms, including the right to development.

112. Education and gender parity had been prioritized through the implementation of a strategic education plan. Hence, by 2030, there would be a well-educated, knowledgeable and productive workforce able to participate in the country's economic, political and social development. The primary school completion rate had already increased to 83 per cent and the gender parity index to 99 per cent, which emphasized not only his Government's commitment to school attendance and completion but also to effective learning. In addition, more than 12,000 Timorese students were currently pursuing higher education studies overseas. Further initiatives had been undertaken in line with the 2030 Agenda, including a gender mainstreaming policy and several incentives to encourage women's participation in public life and decision-making, including a 33 per cent quota for political party lists and designated seats for women at the local government level.

113. The Government had recently drafted its national ocean policy and had made good progress on achieving all the voluntary commitments undertaken at the United Nations Conference to Support the Implementation of Sustainable Development Goal 14. It had identified tourism as a priority in its efforts to diversify the economy while also promoting sustainable development.

114. The first five years of the 2030 Agenda would be critical to its success. His delegation therefore supported the Secretary-General's proposal to revamp the United Nations development system with a view to achieving greater transparency, efficiency and effectiveness.

115. **Mr. Tamalgo** (Burkina Faso) said that the adoption of the 2030 Agenda had reaffirmed the international community's commitment to meet the sustainable development needs of both current and future generations. Burkina Faso had undertaken a number of initiatives aimed at incorporating the Sustainable Development Goals into its national economic and social development plans and policies. Signs of progress in key areas included an average economic growth rate of 5.5 per cent over the period 2006–2016; an average budget deficit of 3.7 for the same period; a sustainable level of public debt; improved human capital; the adoption of a law facilitating the conditions for public-private partnerships; and the implementation of a national environmental policy.

116. However, despite those gains, continued challenges included the promotion of sustained and inclusive forms of development designed to ensure a high level of productivity; universal access to education, health care and clean, affordable sources of energy; the sustainable management of water resources; the preservation and restoration of sustainable land-based ecosystems; and the establishment of planning tools and instruments to improve long-term land use.

117. The implementation of the National Social and Economic Development Plan would help to lay a solid foundation for sustainable development in the country by 2020. However, Burkina Faso would need the technical and financial support of all its development partners and other international actors in order to reform and streamline its institutional and administrative structures and optimize its human capital with a view to achieving truly inclusive development.

118. **Mr. Fox-Drummond Gough** (Brazil) said that the adoption of the global indicators framework was the culmination of five years of negotiations to establish a universal road map for the implementation of the 2030 Agenda. The participation of 44 countries in voluntary national reviews at the 2017 high-level political forum was further evidence of the international community's commitment to that Agenda. Indeed, more than two thirds of the United Nations membership had now showcased their domestic

strategies and policies for the achievement of sustainable development.

119. Nevertheless, to enhance the relevance of the Committee's efforts for the realization of the Sustainable Development Goals, its sustainable development work would need to be updated. For example, while Goal 12, on sustainable patterns of consumption and production, and Goal 6, on water and sanitation, were both crucial enablers of other Goals, neither was currently part of the Committee's annual resolutions. Those resolutions should also focus primarily on action-oriented language aimed at implementing sustainable development worldwide.

120. Brazil was open to analysing possible overlaps, provided adequate opportunities were afforded for a substantive discussion concerning all areas of the 2030 Agenda. However, the Committee's scarce resources should not be used to repeat or reinterpret previous agreements.

121. **Mr. Chinyonga** (Zambia) said that despite the progress made in reducing absolute poverty, three quarters of a billion people worldwide still lived in absolute poverty. Redressing that situation would require far-sighted decision-making at all levels, in particular for developing countries, which would need to mainstream the Sustainable Development Goals and targets into their national policies.

122. His own country had recently launched its seventh national development plan for the period 2017–2021. The plan's multisectoral approach, in line with both the 2030 Agenda and the African Union's Agenda 2063, aimed to create a diversified and resilient economy for sustained growth and socioeconomic transformation.

123. Commending the Secretary-General for his report on implementation of the Sendai Framework for Disaster Risk Reduction 2015–2030 (A/72/259), he noted that Zambia was vulnerable to a number of challenges such as drought, floods, pest infestations, hailstorms, landslides and epidemics that affected both humans and animals. His Government had made significant strides in developing an institutional framework for disaster risk prevention and reduction by aligning its national and subnational platforms with the Hyogo Framework for Action 2005–2015: Building the Resilience of Nations and Communities to Disasters. Zambia would continue that process through its planned domestication of the Sendai Framework.

124. While climate change spared no nation, developed or underdeveloped, it had the potential to undermine all efforts to raise living standards in poor countries. The upcoming twenty-third session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change must therefore establish mechanisms for implementation of the Paris Agreement. In addition to the transfer of appropriate technology, developing countries would require an adequately funded Green Climate Fund for assistance to enhance their adaptive capacities and successfully implement their nationally determined contributions.

125. His delegation welcomed the 2018–2030 Strategic Framework of the United Nations Convention to Combat Desertification as a comprehensive global commitment to achieve land degradation neutrality. The Strategic Framework would help restore the productivity of vast areas of degraded land and reduce the impacts of drought on vulnerable populations.

126. Lastly, his Government had been intensifying its efforts to provide access to affordable, reliable, sustainable and renewable energy by undertaking several initiatives aimed at scaling up solar energy and accelerating private sector investments in small and medium-sized renewable energy projects.

127. **Mr. Gayito** (Ethiopia) said that Ethiopia, which had presented its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum, had been grateful for the opportunity to learn about the practices of other countries and stood ready to share its own experience with those preparing to present their reviews in 2018.

128. While the increasing impacts of climate change posed an existential threat to humanity, their consequences were disproportionately higher for vulnerable countries. However, Ethiopia had already integrated climate resilience and disaster risk reduction strategies into its national sustainable development plans, most recently by launching a 15-year national adaption plan focused on the most vulnerable sectors. The Government would redouble its efforts to mobilize both domestic and external funds to finance the project's $6 billion annual price tag.

129. Increased international support would be vital to ensure the success of national efforts to combat the adverse impacts of climate change and prevent and manage natural disasters. In that regard, Ethiopia was grateful to the Green Climate Fund for approving $45 million to support a project to build and strengthen gender-responsive resilience for the country's most vulnerable communities. Such support would encourage additional national endeavours to build a resilient, diversified economy and would increase the determination of Ethiopia to contribute to the

implementation of both the Paris Agreement and the Sendai Framework.

130. **Mr. Fandjinou** (Togo) said that implementation of the 2030 Agenda was one of the most urgent priorities facing the international community, in view of the commonly accepted definition of sustainable development as meeting the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs. The Sustainable Development Goals now provided a framework for dismantling the silos that had hitherto prevented the integration of the three development pillars. The reform process currently under way within the United Nations would contribute to the achievement of the Goals, in particular the eradication of poverty, the fight against climate change and the creation of peaceful, inclusive societies.

131. As part of its efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals, Togo had undertaken a process of institutional reform for their integration into its national development strategies and policies. One example was a campaign aimed at accelerated growth and employment opportunities for the period 2013–2017, with a focus on bringing essential services such as potable water, quality education, health care and job training, especially for youth, to grass roots communities. A national inclusive finance fund had also been created to offer favourable credit to youth, farmers and other vulnerable sectors of the population as a path out of poverty.

132. As one of the pilot countries involved in the rollout of the Goals, Togo had not only had the honour of presenting its voluntary national review at the high-level political forums in both 2016 and 2017, but would do so again when the forum reconvened in 2018.

133. Urging the international community to increase its cooperation, he called on development partners to prioritize their assistance to the world's most vulnerable populations and to embark without delay on bold programmes that would eliminate extreme poverty.

134. **Mr. Dzonzi** (Malawi) said that climate change was real and that its consequences were indiscriminate and required immediate action. El Niño and La Niña events in the region had already adversely impacted the economy of Malawi and other countries, adversely affecting their agricultural production and causing serious harm to their agro-industries.

135. His Government was in the process of developing a new strategy for growth and development that would incorporate key targets in the areas of disaster risk reduction and resilience, based on the Sendai Framework. There was also an urgent need for national and regional early warning systems, as well as accurate and accessible data. The importance of international cooperation and partnerships for building lasting resilience and ensuring an adequate response to the threat posed by climate change could not be overstated.

136. The long-term impact of climate change on migration, health, livelihoods and housing had the potential to derail plans for development and to hinder progress that would uplift those furthest behind. For that reason, new development strategies should be inclusive. Malawi was committed to including women, girls, children people with disabilities and all members of local communities in the decision-making process.

137. **Ms. Elgarf** (Egypt) said that her country had made significant progress in its efforts to implement the 2030 Agenda and, to that end, had adopted the Egypt Vision 2030 sustainable development strategy. The results of the 2017 national census would, moreover, facilitate the country's efforts to promote sustainable development, in line with its national priorities. Egypt would submit its second voluntary national review to the high-level political forum in 2018.

138. In 2018, Egypt would host the fourteenth meeting of the Conference of the Parties to the Convention on Biological Diversity, which would help to consolidate global efforts to safeguard biodiversity and raise awareness of the importance of protecting the environment. Egypt also underscored the importance of the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change. Addressing climate change would require a collective international effort based on the Paris Agreement and the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities.

139. She urged the international community to support efforts to combat and mitigate the effects of desertification and land degradation, particularly in Africa, and to implement all provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. The international community should also promote the use of clean and renewable energy, as well as the transfer of innovative energy technologies to developing countries, as that would help them achieve their sustainable development objectives.

140. States must enhance their education systems, which could play a critical role in supporting their sustainable development initiatives, so that everyone, including refugees, internally displaced persons and people living in difficult humanitarian circumstances, enjoyed access to high-quality education. Action was

also needed to combat poverty, strengthen the resilience of States and enhance the capacity, particularly of small island developing States, to predict and respond to natural disasters and emergencies.

141. She called on States to forge strong global partnerships and to earmark sufficient and predicable financial resources to support developing countries' efforts to achieve the Sustainable Development Goals and promote prosperity.

142. **Mr. Abuzed** (Libya) said that translating the commitments contained in the 2030 Agenda into reality required a coordinated response by States to the world's development challenges. Libya underscored the right of all peoples to development and called on States to incorporate the three dimensions of sustainable development into their national plans on the basis of the principle of common but differentiated responsibilities. To achieve sustainable development and eradicate poverty, it was crucial that States focused, in particular, on reducing unemployment and providing high-quality health and educational services to their populations.

143. He urged the international community to support efforts by Libya and other affected countries to combat desertification and land degradation, and to implement all provisions of the Convention to Combat Desertification. States in Africa were particularly in need of capacity-building assistance so that they could more effectively respond to and mitigate the impact of natural disasters. It was, moreover, crucial that the international community redoubled its efforts to resolve the world's numerous armed conflicts, which continued to undermine peace, stability and development in many countries. In that connection, he urged friendly States to support the Libyan Government's efforts to rebuild the country's national institutions and restore security and stability.

144. Capital flight from developing countries to both developed countries and safe havens was also slowing down the pace of development. It was time for States to implement the United Nations Convention against Corruption and create mechanisms for the retrieval of plundered assets, which, in the case of Libya, would provide a valuable source of financing for reconstruction and sustainable development initiatives.

145. **Mr. Abdullah** (Nigeria) recalled that it had been two years since the international community had adopted the 2030 Agenda. Citing the advice of the late boxer Mohammed Ali to make the days count rather than count the days, he wondered whether the Committee was indeed making its days count in its efforts to achieve sustainable development. He also wondered what would make the Sustainable Development Goals different from the Millennium Development Goals, since the latter were as ambitious as the former, both were aimed at poverty eradication and improving human well-being, and both also recognized the particular needs of Africa as the world's poorest region.

146. If the slow pace of implementation of the 2030 Agenda continued, Africa was unlikely to meet its targets. For its part, Nigeria was committed to the full implementation of the Agenda, as demonstrated by the presentation of its voluntary national review at the 2017 high-level political forum. However, the international community needed to step up its efforts and mobilize more resources in partnership with African countries.

147. With roughly half of the world's 800 million people living in extreme poverty and lacking access to safe drinking water or basic sanitation, Africa faced major challenges on its path to sustainable development. For the continent to achieve even a modicum of success in providing primary and secondary education, promoting gender equity and reducing maternal mortality, novel approaches would be needed, particularly with respect to governance and combating corruption.

148. Illicit financial flows from the continent were estimated to have caused the loss of more than $1 trillion over the past 50 years, the equivalent of all official development assistance received during the same time frame. With accurate accounting almost impossible to establish due to a lack of data and transparency, especially in view of the prevalence of bribery and trafficking in persons, firearms and drugs, current estimated losses of $50 billion annually were likely understated. The cooperation of the international community in combating illicit financial flows was therefore urgently needed. It was imperative to combat the cross-border flow of corrupt and criminal assets via such means as tax evasion, transfer and trade mispricing, the abuse of public office, trafficking and illegal mining. The international community must hold the facilitators and intermediaries of illicit financial flows to account and take the necessary steps to strengthen asset recovery and return as an integral part of helping Africa to meet the Sustainable Development Goals.

149. The United Nations must assist in developing a global partnership for sustainable development in Africa that included the establishment of an open, rules-based, non-discriminatory trading and financial

system. In that context, the special needs of the least developed countries must be taken into consideration and the benefits of new technologies should be made more accessible and affordable to them.

150. Similarly, cooperation would be needed to help his country and other African nations confront the challenges of climate change. Although Nigeria had implemented national strategies for early warning and disaster risk reduction in line with the Sendai Framework, most developing countries did not have the means or capacities to effectively adapt to climate change and mitigate its impact. It was therefore crucial for developed countries to fulfil their commitment to collectively contribute $100 billion per year to the Green Climate Fund by 2020. Nigeria was particularly interested in the forthcoming deliberations on the Great Green Wall for the Sahara and the Sahel Initiative, which sought to address desertification and drought in the border towns of northwest and northeast Nigeria.

151. **Mr. Ramírez Carreño** (Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela) said that while the 2030 Agenda unquestionably covered a broader scope than any previous sustainable development agreements, it had clearly incorporated many well-known concepts. However, inclusive, sustainable and transformative development would still require political will, especially from developed countries. Poverty eradication strategies that respected the right of States to self-determination would also be needed as permanent sovereignty of States over their own resources was a fundamental factor in promoting socioeconomic development.

152. The decline in oil prices had caused certain macroeconomic imbalances due to the drop in export revenues from crude, a situation compounded by recent coercive measures imposed by the United States with the aim of strangling the Venezuelan economy. Despite such obstacles, however, the Government remained fully committed to advancing citizens' well-being within the parameters of the 2030 Agenda. It had allocated 73 per cent of the national development budget to policies of social inclusion that prioritized solidarity, justice, equity, the promotion of human rights and civic participation.

153. Climate change was a critical issue that disproportionately affected developing nations. As a developing country with a highly diverse geographical profile, Venezuela attached great importance to the Paris Agreement. In that context, the developed countries should strengthen their commitment to provide new, increased and predictable financial resources.

154. Lastly, in order to establish a new development model based on equity, sovereign equality, shared interests, collaboration and solidarity among nations, steps must be taken to transform the economic functioning of the global system, reverse the injustice and irrationality of the market and substantially change the international financial and trade institutions.

155. **Mr. Parajuli** (Nepal) said that Nepal, which had presented its national strategies and policies for sustainable development at the 2017 high-level political forum, had resolutely aligned its national development plans with the Sustainable Development Goals and targets.

156. Climate change had not only aggravated existing problems but had also raised the cost of development for all groups of countries in special situations. As a landlocked least developing country, Nepal faced specific challenges in implementing the 2030 Agenda. His delegation therefore urged stakeholders to consider ways to harness complementarities and linkages among the Goals, including for island and mountain nations. Nepal had itself advanced the idea of developing a matrix for tracking progress and reflecting such linkages in order to enhance the efficiency of existing follow-up and review mechanisms.

157. In the context of disaster risk reduction, an enhanced partnership was needed to build resilience and capacity. To that end, the Sendai Framework must be effectively implemented in a balanced manner in conjunction with the Programme of Action for the Least Developed Countries for the Decade 2011–2020, the Vienna Programme of Action for Landlocked Developing Countries for the Decade 2014–2024 and the Samoa Pathway, as appropriate.

158. Highlighting the importance of clean and renewable energy, he said that Nepal was eager to make use of the country's vast hydroelectric potential for the benefit of the entire South Asian region.

159. **Ms. Eddaou** (Morocco) said that the 2030 Agenda embodied a collective commitment to eradicate poverty, famine and malnutrition by sharing the benefits of multilateral trade with the developing world, in particular the least developed countries and small island developing States. Stakeholders across the board had identified the primary challenges as reducing climate change, combating desertification, preserving biodiversity and improving disaster risk preparedness. In that context, Morocco was actively engaged in the promotion of renewable energy, green agriculture and sustainable tourism, and would support all efforts aimed at implementing the Paris Agreement.

160. Through a process of broad multi-stakeholder consultations involving the private sector and civil society, Morocco had adopted a national sustainable development strategy that was intended as a tool to lead the country towards an inclusive green economy.

161. The Kingdom of Morocco had demonstrated its commitment to achieving sustainable development by mobilizing an unprecedented number of private sector participants at the twenty-second session of the Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change, held in Marrakesh in November 2016. In that regard, and in conjunction with the General Confederation of Moroccan Enterprises, the Kingdom had initiated a private sector climate strategy aimed at strengthening capacities through human capital. Along similar lines, the country's strategies for economic and social reforms included the goal of increasing renewable energy production to 52 per cent of total electricity generated by the year 2030.

162. Sustainable tourism was also a major development goal for his country. The Government had established a programme entitled Vision 2020 that aimed to make Morocco one of the world's top 20 travel destinations by 2020, which would entail the creation of 470,000 new jobs in the national tourism industry.

163. In the overall context of achieving the Sustainable Development Goals, Morocco would continue to promote policies that actively supported those countries most vulnerable to global warming, particularly African countries and small island developing States.

The meeting rose at 6 p.m.